

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 2 and 4 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claims 2 and 4 are rewritten in independent form to place claims 2 and 4 in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 6 and 7 are amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 3 and to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, Fig. 6A-C, and page 13, lines 1-10. Claim 5 is amended for better clarity, and claim 3 is canceled.

Claim 8 is added to recite similar subject matter recited in claim 4. However, claim 8 recites a pressure plate (see the specification at Fig. 2 and page 14, lines 3-10), without reciting "pressing means."

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiners Colilla and Williams for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the May 30, 2006 personal interview. The substance of the personal interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,561,506 to Sasaki; rejects claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 3095029 to Takashi; and rejects claims 1, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,082,913 to Yamamoto in view of Takashi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 6 and 7 are amended to recite a forcible curling unit that reduces curling of sheets during feeding in a sheet feed direction that is substantially perpendicular to a sheet width direction and wherein the forcible curling unit includes a rib which is provided inside the sheet supply unit to protrude toward the cover so that a tip of the rib will press the stack of sheets accommodated in the sheet supply unit at its central part in regard to the sheet width direction, as outlined above. The applied references do not disclose or suggest these features.

In particular, the Office Action recognizes that Yamamoto does not disclose or suggest such a forcible curling unit. Sasaki discloses paper curling in the paper width direction (see Fig. 42). Takashi discloses a device having a base-like part 36 that curls paper in a paper width direction (see Fig. 6). Sasaki and Takashi do not disclose or suggest a forcible curling unit that reduces curling of sheets in a sheet feed direction. Therefore, Sasaki and Takashi do not supply the subject matter lacking in Yamamoto.

In fact, Sasaki, Takashi and Yamamoto, either individually or in combination, do not recognize the problem associated with paper curling in the sheet feed direction.

Furthermore, the applied references, Sasaki, Takashi and Yamamoto, do not disclose or suggest "wherein the forcible curling unit includes a rib which is provided inside the sheet supply unit to protrude toward the cover so that a tip of the rib will press the stack of sheets accommodated in the sheet supply unit at its central part in regard to the sheet width direction," as originally recited in claim 3, currently recited in claims 1, 6 and 7. In particular, the Office Action asserts that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to combine Takashi with Yamamoto. However, as discussed during the personal interview, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine Takashi's base-like part 36 in Fig. 6 with Yamamoto's device. Specifically, as discussed during the personal interview, Yamamoto's device does not have a stopper. On the other hand, Takashi's base-like part 36 is designed for a device that has a stopper 21. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to introduce Takashi's base-like part 36 that is designed specifically for Takashi's stopper 21 with Yamamoto's device which does not have a stopper.

In view of the above, Sasaki, Takashi and Yamamoto, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1, 6 and 7, and claim 5 depending therefrom.

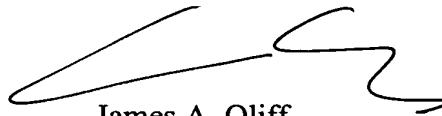
For at least the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), §102(b) and §103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 is patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1, from which it depends, as well as for additional features it recites. In particular, claim 8 recites similar subject matter recited in allowable claim 4, except without reciting means-plus-function limitations.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2 and 4-8 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Amendment Transmittal

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